



Newtown High School

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Testimony of Lisa Kapitan
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in support of

SB 186 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL COUNSELORS.
Education Committee- February 26, 2018

Senator Slossberg, Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Lisa Kapitan and I am a school counselor at Newtown High School as well as a member of the Connecticut School Counselor Association. Thank you for the opportunity to offer **testimony in support of Senate Bill 186- An Act Concerning School Counselors.**

I am in full support of the Senate Bill 186 that adds school counselors to the statutes where currently the term guidance counselor is used. The name change may seem like a simple change, however the meaning behind the title is great. The amount of hours needed to earn the graduate degree in School Counseling, including both time in the classroom and with practicum and internship experiences is well beyond what was necessary to become a “guidance counselor”.

After 3 years being a full-time graduate student at Fairfield University, including a semester of practicum hours and a full school year internship, I earned my masters degree in School Counseling in 2008. I served a few long-term sub positions before getting my job at Newtown High School in 2009. In the last 9 years I have been a School Counselor for the 9th grade welcoming in over 3,000 students and helping them to transition into the high school. I work with students both in individual, group, and classroom settings addressing a multitude of emotional, academic, and career focused needs.

The role of a School Counselor is also very different than what a Guidance Counselor used to do. The role has changed from a focus on post-graduation planning and administrative tasks to a much more comprehensive model to improve student outcomes in areas of emotional support, social development, academic needs, and post-secondary planning. School Counselors are a vital role within an educational team who consistently collaborates with other staff members to advocate for student success. Within my school, I work with the school psychologists, social workers, and administrative team to best address each individual need.

I would ask that you amend the underlying bill to include the Connecticut School Counselor Association proposal to have the State Board of Education adopt guidelines and recommendations for a comprehensive school counseling program. The language states:

The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Connecticut School Counselor Association, shall adopt guidelines and recommendations to ensure that all students have access to a comprehensive school counseling programing. Such recommendations shall ensure that academic, social-emotional, and post-secondary and career readiness programming is delivered by a certified school counselor with adequate training. The State Board of Education shall make any such guidelines and recommendations available to local and regional boards of education.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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